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For Immediate Release

National Medical Association Supports Public Insurance Option

June 11, 2009, Washington, DC...The National Medical Association (NMA) stands firm in its support of the public insurance plan option proposed by President Obama. "AMA's reservations are duly noted, however, competition is healthy, we need a public option along with the private plans to create the competition that will lead to lower cost and increased quality of care for patients," said Dr. Carolyn Barley Britton, president of the National Medical Association. "Public plans such as Medicaid and Medicare have done a great deal to improve access to care for millions of Americans," she added.

"Lack of choice is a major concern for our communities. A public option will give people an alternative where private plans are not willing to go," said Dr. Niva Lubin- Johnson, chair, Board of Trustees of the Association.

"In this instance we must disagree with the AMA as we did at Medicare's inception in 1965. The public option, properly designed, will better serve the needs of our people", said Mohammad N. Akhter, M.D., MPH, executive director of the National Medical Association. "Reforming the nation's health care infrastructure will always need to focus on what is best for the people and not what is always good for doctors, hospitals or the insurance industry," he added.

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Founded in 1895, the National Medical Association is the nation's oldest and largest medical association representing the interests of more than 30,000 African-American physicians and their patients. The NMA repeatedly advocates for policies that would assure equitable and quality health care for all people.